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CONTINUED COMMUNIST EFFORTS TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER GDRLa Libre Belgique
20 Oct 1953Georges Blun,
Special correspondent in Bonn

Since the riots of 17 June 1953 in the GDR, the Communists have been afraid that the people will revolt again. Three flying squads are prepared to report to any riot scene; the secret police are always on alert; and the espionage, counterespionage, and agitator corps are being reorganized and enlarged.

At the time of the festivities celebrating the fourth anniversary of the GDR, the authorities increased their efforts to convince the people that they will never be happier than they are now. The cities are being restored and places of amusement are being built, but such things do not substitute for food. There is plenty of bread available, but no butter or preserves.

The Soviet propaganda note of 15 August 1953, stating that no more reparations would be demanded of the GDR, was nothing more than a spectacular promise. The payments will continue, but will be called "gifts to the Soviets as a token of the German people's gratitude for the services that friend Russia has rendered them."

Railroad-car plants have been called on to supply the Soviets with 25 twenty-car refrigerator trains by 31 December 1953. The same plants have been told that most of their 1954 production will be delivered to the USSR, including 495 express-train day coaches with seats convertible into berths, 1,050 Diesel-powered rail cars, and 1,550 freight car chassis.

Dictator Walter ("Goatee") Ulbricht, Deputy Minister-President of the GDR and First Secretary of the [Socialist Unity] Party, did not attend the anniversary festivities. He had been called to Moscow to make a report before vacationing in the Crimea. It is said in his own circles that he has gone mad and is convinced that the Americans want to have him assassinated. Since 17 June 1953, he has not ventured outside without an escort of heavily armed guards. In all large industrial plants he has set up shock squads armed with lead-filled rubber hoses. Groups of three or four plain-clothes men patrolling the Soviet sector of Berlin at night scrutinize, question, and search late passers-by, trying to discover anything that could be used for sabotage.

It took Ulbricht 4 days to recover from the shock of Adenauer's re-election. "Of what importance are the West German elections?" he said. "They will be forgotten in 2 weeks. We must turn our attention from West Germany, cut off Bonn, and retake all of Berlin." Neues Deutschland, the main organ of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), proclaims, "Let us cut off Bonn; it is all Berlin that we must have." Raduensk, head of the GDR press services, rephrased Ulbricht's statement as follows: "To prove that all of Berlin must belong to our People's Republic, our partisans will use violence, if necessary." The party's new program includes making the Elbe a definitive strategic frontier, integrating the GDR into the Soviet Bloc, and taking Berlin by force.

It is almost certain that the Soviets would not intervene to force the Allies to evacuate Berlin; they could, theoretically, leave the task to the Communist military police equipped with T-34 tanks. However, it is believed that they will think a long time before playing this dangerous game.

"Goatee" has ordered Wollweber, his espionage chief [State Secretary for State Security], to use trickery and force to get his men into the administrative services and large industries of West Berlin. Ulbricht has ordered

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Wollweber also to set up Communist cells in the Social Democratic Party and in the party's intelligence organization, whose operations are very successfully and exclusively conducted in the East Zone. The security squads in plants in the Soviet Zone must "furnish" three "traitors" per thousand workers. Since it is difficult to find enough traitors, it is assumed that anyone who served in the fascist Wehrmacht is a potential traitor.

Wollweber realizes that Ulbricht is losing his grip. When it is pointed out to Wollweber that his decisions and actions do nothing to help the situation, he points to his head and says, "Goatee ordered it." When Wollweber is very angry, he always adds, "The old man is completely mad." Ulbricht has given the order to create panic in the three sectors of West Berlin, and to increase the number of kidnappings in order to create an atmosphere of insecurity. This shows that he does not understand how to cope with the situation.

The Allies' best friend is Ulbricht. As long as he is in power, the Western powers can depend 100 percent on the people and on 60 percent of the members of the SED itself.

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